

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A piston ring for covering a circumferential surface of a piston, comprising a lateral surface for covering the circumferential surface of the piston and support segments having retaining surfaces for engaging the top and bottom of the piston, wherein said piston ring defines a joint between ends thereof allowing the piston ring to be elastically deformed in the radial direction, a first tongue arranged on one of said ends of said piston ring, said first tongue engaging an opening defined in the other of said ends of said piston ring, wherein said first tongue includes retaining segments which comprise extensions of said support segments in the circumferential direction, said retaining segments supportively engagable with the top and bottom of the piston for axially supporting said first tongue, said piston ring further comprising carrier segments arranged proximate the opening as extensions of said support segments for axially supporting said other of said ends of said piston ring, said carrier segments being supported on the retaining segments, and a second tongue at said joint which engages a second opening, said first and second tongues being radially equidistant from a center axis of said piston ring, said second tongue and said second opening forming a sealing surface between the ends of said piston ring for preventing damping fluid from flowing through the joint between the top of the piston and the bottom of the piston, wherein an entire axial extent of said second tongue is arranged in an area of said lateral surface between said support segments.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) The piston ring of claim 1, wherein said second tongue is in series with said first tongue.

4. (withdrawn) The piston ring of claim 1, wherein said second tongue is arranged in said other of said ends and the second opening is defined in said one of said ends, wherein said second tongue is oriented in a direction opposite that of said first tongue.

5. (withdrawn) The piston ring of claim 4, wherein said second tongue is shorter in the circumferential direction of said piston ring than said first tongue.

6. (currently amended) A The piston ring of claim 1 for covering a circumferential surface of a piston, comprising a lateral surface for covering the circumferential surface of the piston and support segments having retaining surfaces for engaging the top and bottom of the piston, wherein said piston ring defines a joint between ends thereof allowing the piston ring to be elastically deformed in the radial direction, a first tongue arranged on one of said ends of said piston ring, said first tongue engaging an opening defined in the other of said ends of said piston ring, wherein said first tongue includes retaining segments which comprise extensions of said support segments in the circumferential direction, said retaining segments supportively engagable with the top and bottom of the piston for axially supporting said first tongue, said piston ring further comprising carrier segments arranged proximate the opening as

extensions of said support segments for axially supporting said other of said ends of said piston ring, said carrier segments being supported on the retaining segments, and a second tongue at said joint which engages a second opening, said first and second tongues being radially equidistant from a center axis of said piston ring, said second tongue and said second opening forming a sealing surface between the ends of said piston ring for preventing damping fluid from flowing through the joint between the top of the piston and the bottom of the piston, wherein said second tongue is shorter in the circumferential direction of said piston ring than said first tongue.

7.-10. (canceled)